

ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

NUMBER 62

For all former members of the 307th Bomb Wing at Lincoln AFB, Nebraska

MARCH 2011

President's Column

The 307th Flies Again!

The first and most important purpose of our Association is to perpetuate the legacy, history and memory of the 307th Bomb Wing. We who served at Lincoln during the Cold War years have an understandable tendency to regard "OUR 307th" as the center and circumference of excellence because of our role in keeping the peace. Yet fairness demands we recognize that our predecessor and successor organizations also have distinguished themselves through valor in combat. And now there's a "new kid" on the block!

Yes, for the first time in over a generation, the 307th Bomb Wing flag has been uncased. The legacy continues, the history flows on and new memories are being added as the 307th Bomb Wing at Barksdale AFB, Louisiana, carries on the proud heritage we were privileged to share.

The formal activation took place at Barksdale on 8 January, as the 917th Bomb Wing was redesignated as the 307th Bomb Wing. The ceremonies were attended by many alumni of predecessor wings and I invite you to enjoy the accounts and photos of this historic event in the following pages.

Speaking for all the members of our Association, I bid a warm welcome to all the men and women of the latest 307th Bomb Wing. May you fly bravely and safely in the dangerous skies that you will traverse in the future.

Also in this issue of our Newsletter is an update on planning for our 2012 Reunion. I especially want to direct your attention to the Interest Survey on page 11 and ask that you print out or clip it, fill it out and send it to Billy Williams. As always, this survey is non-binding, but will be enormously helpful to our Reunion Coordinator as he

seeks to negotiate with our hotel and shape the Lincoln Reunion to accommodate **YOUR** wishes.

Finally, Mike Gingrich and I wish to express our gratitude for your patience and understanding over the delayed Newsletter. His household and mine have been facing, and are still facing, an unusually challenging array of health issues. We appreciate your support and pledge to do everything in our power to stay on schedule from here on.

Happy New Year to you and yours. Best wishes for health and happiness in the sporty days ahead.

Pete Todd

Important Info for Veterans

Don Mowry recently sent us a 4 page long comprehensive collection of websites and links containing a broad spectrum of information of interest to veterans. It appears that the list was compiled by Bill Nelson, the 1st Vice Commander of American Legion Post 55. We intend to make it available through our website, but it may require some time to reformat it and make it fully functional. Watch the home page for "Vets Info", and follow the links.

307th Bomb Wing B-47/KC-97 Association

Officers of the Association:

President: Pete Todd, 1250 Big Valley Dr, Colorado Springs, CO 80919-1015. Phone 719-531-5874.
Email: petetodd59@comcast.net.

Vice President/Newsletter: Mike Gingrich, 2527 Greenlefe Drive, Beavercreek, OH 45431. Phone 937-426-5675.
Email: mikegingri@cs.com

Secretary: Larry Boggess, 4304 Ridgecrest Dr, Colorado Springs, CO 80918. Phone 719-548-8024.
Email: LarryJanB@gmail.com.

Treasurer: Tony Minnick, 5920 Robin Court, Lincoln, NE 68516. Phone 402-423-6848. Email: tonym@inetnebr.com

Association Founders:
Billy Williams, 5546 Enterprise Drive, Lincoln, NE 68521. Phone 402-438-6061.
Email: bwilliams17@neb.rr.com

Betty C Pelletier, deceased 29 November 2004.

The Association is strongly reliant upon key members who have volunteered their time and effort to keep the wheels running smoothly. They are:

Membership: Jan Boggess, 4304 Ridgecrest Dr, Colorado Springs, CO 80918. Phone 719-548-8024.
Email: LarryJanB@gmail.com.

Membership: Bev Minnick, 5920 Robin Court, Lincoln, NE 68516. Phone 402-423-6848. Email: tonym@inetnebr.com

Co-Historian: Mike Hill, 1405 8th St SW, Minot, ND 58701. Phone 701-838-9288.
Email: mikendaf@ndak.net.

Co-Historian: Robert Loffredo, 6004 SW 2nd St, Des Moines, IA 50315. Phone 515-285-3445. Email: implanenuts@mchsi.com

Assistant Editor: Earl Hill, 52309 SW Jobin Lane, Scappoose, OR 97056. Phone 503-543-0256. Email: eehill@centurytel.net.

Lincoln 2012 Reunion Chairmen:
Billy Williams, 5546 Enterprise Drive, Lincoln, NE 68521. Phone 402-438-6061.
Email: bwilliams17@neb.rr.com

The Association is a non-profit Veterans Organization. All contributions to the organization are gratefully received, but presently are not deductible under IRS Code. The President, Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer are elected by majority vote of all members at each business meeting.

Donations

We wish to acknowledge the generosity of those who have recently made donations to the Association's General Fund.

George B Aaron
Mary Ashton
Beth Bringhurst
Bruce D Cluck
Dallas L Crosby
Louis R Durham
D E "Sarge" Finn
Toni L Hager
Ralph S Krigsvold
John Lundak
F C "Mac" McMillin
Franklin J Medrick
Thomas J Mills
Ludwig A Paller
John J Pino
William T Schwob
Riley Sine
Nellie Spence
James Villa
In Memory of Elmo Hills
William H Filpula
George A Nigh III
James R Sine
Billy D Williams

The download version of this newsletter on our website has the photographs in full color.

Newsletter Schedule

The 307th Bomb Wing B-47/KC-97 Association Newsletter is published for the benefit of all former members of the 307th Bomb Wing of Lincoln AFB, Nebraska. It is expected to be published three times a year in March, July, and November.

Contributions for publication in the newsletter are encouraged, and are essential for the success of this newsletter.



The Last Flight

The verse on the SAC Chapel Memorial Window says it best...

Arnold L Birch, ARS, Oroville WA, April 2010.

Alfred Brooks, ARS, Punta Gorda FL, 13 January 2011.

Patricia M Byrom, Harrisonburg VA, 29 June 2010.

Roy C Hackathorn, FMS, Marietta OH, 1 November 2007.

Elvin "Elmo" Hills, 370 th & OMS, Clinton IN, 18 December 2010.

David R Jacquart, OMS, FMS, Ironwood MI, 22 August 2010.

Kenneth L Martin, AEMS, Winona MO, date unknown.

Alice L Nash, Fayetteville NC, April 2007

Clinton V Owenby, FMS, Prescott AZ, 18 April 2010.

Allen Osborn, ARS, Atlanta GA, 19 September 2010

John S Rogers, FMS & Hqs, Albuquerque NM, 1 August 2009.

Mary Rogers, Albuquerque NM, 13 August 2010.

Peter R Rollin, 371st&OMS, Altus OK, 22 May 2010.

Bill Schuck, ARS, Long Beach NC, 2 January 2011.

Robert L Schultz, 370th BS, Colorado Springs CO, 24 December 2010.

Irene States, Columbine Valley CO, 22 August 2010.

William "Bill" Tuley, ARS, Boonville IN, 2009.

Maurice Ward, Lincoln NE, 23 August 2003.

Norris W Yates, Round Rock TX, date unknown.

*I heard the voice of the Lord, saying,
Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?
Then said I, Here I am; send me.
Isaiah 6:8*

A list of Last Flights back to 2003 is at the EventsTab on the website.

Around the Wing

It's doubtful you ever read the masthead on page two. But if you do, you'll see a new name showing up there, namely that of Earl Hill, who calls Scappoose, Oregon, his home. Earl has volunteered to help out with the newsletter and has thus been awarded the title of Assistant Editor for which the only incurred benefit is our good will. Earl is busy learning the software we use to put things together and how we proceed to do so. Earl is both a skillful writer and wood worker after having survived about 30 years working in medical imaging for GE. He claims that much of his writing ability comes from his interest in emulating the styles of some of the founding giants of American literature such as Mark Twain, Poe, Ambrose Bierce and H L Mencken. It's good to have Earl on board.

307th Bomb Wing Reactivation. Well, the big 307th news currently revolves around the reactivation of the 307th Bomb Wing at Barksdale AFB in LA, as a B-52 wing, under the new Global Strike Command, which is charged with the nuclear mission, formerly under SAC. The reborn 307th will remain an Air Reserve wing, consisting of two squadrons: the 93rd Bomb Squadron will be a full time training unit, and the 343rd BS will have the nuclear strike mission. The event took place on 8 January and hopefully every one of you received a personal invite. Attendees from our bunch were Jack Lee, John Yaryan, Otis Wehrly, Earl Bullock, Ivan McKinney, Jerry Sparks, Larry Hall, Don Davis, Michael Myatt, Robert Hart, Lavern Musselman, Robert Eells, Jim Cinnamon, Charlie Dabbs, Jerry Blankenship, Bill DeAngelis, Dale Jones, and James Villa. These 18 gentlemen made up about two thirds of the 30 alumni attending. Alumni from all generations of the 307th attended and were individually recognized. This was a big deal at Barksdale; the ceremonies were attended by approximately 900 people. We thank our guys who attended for standing up proud and helping to pass the torch. The nearby photo shows the unfurling of the 307th flag which completed the Reactivation. There are more photos and descriptions starting on page 4.

We have had a fair amount of contact recently with the 307th Bomb Wing/Group (B-29:1946-1954), and both we and they would like to identify guys who were with the B-29s on Okinawa who returned with the wing to Lincoln AFB. Names we are aware of are **Steve Mattick (deceased), Tom Saltzman (deceased), Paul Trudeau, Wally Whitehurst, and Don Nigro.** We're sure there are many more of you who served with both versions of the wing, so how about dropping a line and identifying yourself?



With the unfurling of the 307th Bomb Wing flag, the wing comes to life once again

Several issues ago, **Smokey Beucus** wrote lamenting that there was never any ARS/tanker info in the newsletter. Well, several of our loyal members have taken a few steps to alleviate this situation. In this issue we have *A Tribute to Larry*, by **Don Campbell** as he recalls his friend **Larry French**. Then, **Ivan McKinney** has sent two informative accounts of life on the tankers, of which, because of space limitations in this issue, one will be deferred until the next issue. Keep 'em coming, Tankers.

From **Roger Bender** at roger.bender@gmail.com. I was stationed at LAFB with the 307th AEMS from Jan 2 1959 to June 2 1962 as a radio repairman (30150) in the Com-Nav section. I was a member of the 1961 Bomb-Comp team shown in the "Photos from Member 1" page of the website. The photo is not large enough or clear enough to make out faces, but I believe that I was one of the guys in the front row. My father-in-law, Bill Smith was also at this competition, but with the 98th AEMS. I would appreciate hearing from anyone who was in the 307th AEMS during that period.

My name is Niyati Brown (niyati333@aol.com) and I am the daughter of **Richard Arthur Lauk**. My dad is still alive, 79 years old, retired from the Air Force, and lives in Spokane, WA. I showed him the website I found and he was very excited to reconnect. He recognized some of the people on the list and some of the pictures. He does not have a computer so I am doing the work for him. He was stationed in Lincoln, Nebraska, England, Pakistan, and Spain with his unit. He was in the 307th

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and/or 370th from its beginning. He flew later on B-52's as a maintenance crew member, down in the hole of the plane below the co-pilot.

Hello- I was not stationed with the 307th. I was down in Kansas with the 310th ARS. Just interested what is going on with the old SAC ARS Sq. Did you know a fellow by the name of S/ Sgt Lawrence L McLaughlin, engineer? He was my engineer from 1953 until July 1954, when he transferred to your base. Thank You. Bob Holland, (robhol1931@aol.com).

A poignant event: Tammy Hanna January recently found us through our web site. Tammy is the daughter of **Cliff Hanna**, formerly of the 371st BS. This is significant because Cliff left the Air Force in the early 1960s to become a Coast Guard amphibian rescue pilot. Cliff lost his life, along with those of his crew, in a 1967 rescue mission in bad weather in the Gulf. In 2007, the USCG dedicated a monument to Cliff and his crew, and **Hank Grogan**, who had known Cliff, supported their quest for info concerning Cliff. Unfortunately, despite a search, neither our association nor the USCG had any records concerning Cliff's surviving family. So regretfully, the loop remained open. Then, in November, we received an email from Tammy. Tammy was unaware of the monument and memorial ceremony, so we put her in touch with Hank who filled her in. Tammy then told us that she, her sister, and her mother are all interested in attending our 2012 reunion in Lincoln. A good ending to a sad story.

A few of us still have enough energy to drop a line: most recently we've heard from Hank Grogan, Don Mowry,

Ken Tarwater, Lou Paller, Bill Novetzke, Dick Goodson, Charlie Dabbs, Larry Hall & Lavern Musselman...

307th Bomb Wing Reactivates at Barksdale

By Tech. Sgt. Jeff Walston

A crowd of more than 900 witnessed Lt. Gen. Charles E. Stenner Jr., commander of Air Force Reserve Command, preside over ceremonies deactivating the 917th Wing, re-designating the 917th Operations Group as the 917th Fighter Group and reactivating of the 307th Bomb Wing at Barksdale Air Force Base, Jan. 8, 2011.

Brig. Gen. John J. Mooney III, commander, 307th Bomb Wing, accepted the wing's colors from the presiding officer and in doing so accepted the charge of leading the members of his command and upholding the unit's honor and traditions, as well as the mission of the new Air Force Reserve wing.

General Mooney said he was thankful for the opportunity he has been given to lead the AFRC and 10th Air Force in strengthening the nuclear enterprise of this great nation.

"The 307th Bomb Wing is first and foremost a combat wing with a sole focus on strategic nuclear deterrence and global strike. We will embrace 'Deter and Assure.' At our heart will be a culture of rigorous compliance and continued dedication to excellence," General Mooney said.

The new Air Force Reserve wing will also focus on B-52 aircrew training and the bombing mission.

The 307th Bomb Wing was activated as the 307th Bombardment Group (Heavy) in 1942. The unit was deactivated on Sept. 30, 1975, after the end of the Vietnam War.

The 307th BW will report to the Tenth Air Force, Naval Air Station Joint Reserve Base, Ft. Worth, Texas, and will

be gained by the Air Force Global Strike Command. Headquarters Air Force at the Pentagon directed these new actions in support of AFGSC which is also located at Barksdale and will oversee Air Force nuclear weapons training and operations at the new unit.

Scattered through the audience at Hoban Hall for the reactivation ceremony were approximately 40 alumni of the 307th Bomb Wing from the Korean, Vietnam and Cold War eras. Most traveled many miles to witness the reactivation.

"I expected this would be my last great adventure," said Master Sgt. (Ret) Loren Longman, an 88 year-old veteran of the 307th, who traveled from Tampa, Fla., by car. "It was my honor to be a part of the reactivation."

To show the alumni how their heritage will be kept alive, they were escorted through the 307th BW headquarters building where historic artifacts and photos are prominently displayed throughout the hallways. Many of the veterans expressed their gratitude for the unexpected briefings at B-52 and A-10 displays after the ceremonies.

"Today we are in the company of patriots, heroes, members of the greatest generation ... the legacy of the 307th Bomb Wing is legendary, from Wake Island to Rabaul - YAP - TRUK - PALAU - BALIKAN - 5,800 SORTIES OVER KOREA AND ARC LIGHT SORTIES DURING VIETNAM. We are honored to have been chosen to continue this great heritage," said General Mooney.

As General Mooney concluded his remarks, he looked out into the audience and spoke to the men and women of the 917th FG and 307th BW.

"In you, I see the highly disciplined and elite team of citizen Airmen who are undertaking this mission, fully understanding the special trust and responsibility placed on us by our nation for the most powerful weapons in its arsenal. Thank you for your commitment and service. I know you will make the two organizations that stood up here today

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the finest in the AFRC and the U.S. Air Force ... Thank you.”

Bomb Wing Traces Lineage Back To World War II

By Tech. Sgt. Jeff Walston

The 307th Bomb Wing has a rich history that dates back to 1942 when it was activated as the 307th Bombardment Group (Heavy) by the Army Air Corps Combat Command after the attack on Pearl Harbor that thrust the United States into war with Japan.

In succeeding years, the 307th's participation in World War II, the Korean Conflict, the Cold War, and the Vietnam Conflict proved it to be one of the most renowned bombing units in military annals.

On April 15, 1942, the 307th began operations as a B-17 Flying Fortress bomber unit at Geiger Field, Wash. Its first mission--to guard the northwestern United States and Alaskan coasts against armed invasion.

After patrolling the American coastline for five months, the 307th's B-17s were replaced with the famous B-24 "Liberators."

The group's bombers received their first taste of combat Dec. 27, 1942. Twenty-seven of the group's aircraft were deployed from Oahu to Midway Island. From there, the B-24s staged their first attack against the Japanese during the war.

For the remainder of the war, the 307th aircraft continued to cripple the debilitated enemy. The group elements neutralized Japanese forces at Yap, Truk, and Palau Islands. Bombing strikes against Japanese shipping centers in the Philippines inhibited the enemy from gaining a further stronghold in the area. An unescorted attack by the group's aircraft against oil refineries at Balikpapan, Borneo, Oct. 3, 1944, helped assure an allied victory in the South Pacific.

No longer needed, the highly decorated group returned to the United States in

December 1945, and was subsequently deactivated.

The 307th Bombardment Group was reactivated Aug. 4, 1946, at MacDill Field, Fla., the group was equipped with huge B-29 Superfortresses and the wing was appropriately designated "Very Heavy."

The Strategic Air Command (SAC) then selected the 307th as its first anti-submarine unit in December 1946. Precursor to similar SAC units, the group acted as a "guinea pig" in the development of new anti-sub tactics and operational procedures.

In 1950, the group was temporarily assigned to Kadena Airfield on Okinawa. From there, the group bombers staged attacks against the rapidly advancing communist forces in South Korea.

Finished with its task in Korea, the 307th returned to the United States in 1954. Assigned to Lincoln Air Force Base, Neb., the group's B-29s were replaced with swept-winged B-47 Stratojets. The sleek new bombers were the first jet-propelled aircraft assigned to the wing. The wing was then designated as the 307th Bombardment Wing (Medium).

On July 1, 1955, the 307th Bomb Wing was placed under the command of the Eighth Air Force. There were 43 B-47s and 21 KC-97 type aircraft assigned to the Wing.

The 307th Bombardment Wing along with other units at Lincoln AFB, were realigned under the SAC's Second Air Force headquartered at Barksdale AFB, La., on Jan. 1, 1959.

During its tenure at Lincoln AFB, the wing set records that may never be equaled again. It won a SAC Bomb Competition and participated in the Cuban Missile crisis. On Oct. 1, 1959, the wing established a never broken SAC record for 2,327 consecutive sorties without deviation from the flying schedule, and they also won the SACs coveted "Fairchild Trophy."

May 1960 witnessed the transfer of the 307th Air Refueling Squadron to Selfridge AFB in Michigan. This was done as part of SAC's plan for aircraft dispersal and to position the tankers farther along the EWO routes of the egressing bombers. The ARS remained at Selfridge until deactivated in 1964. The unit was later reactivated in KC-135 tankers and served through the Persian Gulf War.

While at Lincoln, the 307th functioned as a Combat Ready Unit, conducting combat training missions and maintaining an alert force commitment, both at Lincoln and overseas bases, until its deactivation on March 25, 1965.

The 307th was formed again as a tanker wing for the "Vietnam Conflict," and later in the "Conflict" served as a "B-52 Wing" flying "Arc Light" missions. In the spring of 1967, the wing added strategic bombing to its mission. Equipped with the B-52D Stratofortresses and crews loaned from other wings, it began high altitude bombing of enemy targets in South Vietnam on April 11. Under the operational nickname "Arc Light," the wing bombers flew over 35,000 strikes against the communist enemy from 1967 to mid-1970.

After another brief retirement period, the 307th was reorganized from the 4258th Strategic Wing at U-Tapao Airfield, Thailand, to support the air war in the Republic of Vietnam. Designated the 307th Strategic Wing on 1 April 1970, the two-war veteran unit began operations as an aerial refueling wing. Equipped with KC-135 Stratotankers, the wing refueled Vietnam-bound fighters under the nickname "Young Tiger." From 1967 to mid-1970, the wing tankers flew over 50,000 sorties and were credited with 80 aircraft "saves."

The 307th Strategic Wing was selected as SAC's outstanding wing for 1972, and received the Omaha Award for its support of Southeast Asia (SEA) operations. It was deactivated on Sept. 30, 1975. The wing was awarded four Air Force Outstanding Unit Awards with the Combat "V" Device, and twice was

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awarded the Republic of Vietnam Galantry Cross, with Palm.

During its brief history in Southeast Asia, the 307th received three Air Force Outstanding Unit Awards--two of which were with other Eighth Air Force Units--for their role in the Vietnam Conflict.

The official website for the reactivated 307th Bomb Wing is at: www.307bw.afrc.af.mil/

Take a look and see everything that's going on!

Right: John Yaryan in front of the 307th BW HQ auditorium at Barksdale.



Below left: 307th BW/BG alumni assemble for the official group photo on the Barksdale flightline.

Right: Larry Hall, Jim Villa and Jim Cinnamon celebrate a mini-reunion at Barksdale.



The assembled alumni of the 307th BW/BG are applauded as they stand to be recognized and presented to the audience at the reactivation ceremony.





Above: Jerry Worthy recounts highlights of his 20 B-29 Korean combat missions with the 307th for the audience at the Reactivation Banquet. Jerry later was with the 307th ARS for a short time as an aircraft commander.

Right: SMSgt Loren Longman, age 88, proudly wears the uniform for this historic occasion. He served with the 307th as a B-29 flight engineer from 1947 to 1955.



The KC-97, Hero of the Cold War
*By Ivan L. McKinney, Lt Col USAF (Ret.),
 former KC-97 Navigator, 307th ARS*

At the onset of the Cold War, the United States had “The Bomb,” but the means of delivering it onto our aggressive adversaries required many forward operating bases through which bombers could transit, or the bombers would have to be stationed at those forward operating bases, along with “The bombs.” There was only one exception, the B-36, and it was not combat-ready until 1950-51 or later. When the B-47 began to be hurriedly produced about 1953, it had the capability of striking targets which the National War Plan required, but in order to accomplish this task, it absolutely required an air refueling capability in the forward areas. The only alternative was to station the B-47’s much closer to our adversaries’ targets, and there weren’t enough friendly bases and runways to handle all the B-47’s that our war planners believed were necessary for our protection. Thus, air refueling became the major requirement for our Mutually Assured Destruction (MAD) war plan.

I was a Staff Sergeant Ground Controlled Approach (GCA) Operator at Ernest Harmon AFB, Newfoundland in 1952. I had given radar approach directions to many C-97 Military Air Transport Service (MATS) aircraft, as well as to B-29, B-50, C-54, C-74, C-118, C-121 and C-124’s using Ernest Harmon as a transit base between the U. S. and

Europe. The C-97 was a big airplane, and in order to make a safe radar approach to the runway in turbulent, snowy Newfoundland, it had to descend at about 950 feet per minute on final – Harmon’s glide path was 4 ½ degrees because of the surrounding terrain, instead of the standard 3 degrees most everywhere else. GCA operators and pilots of large airplanes, such as the C-97, had an ongoing “love affair” at Harmon, because without GCA, many approaches and landings would have been impossible at this northern base. At this time, I had no idea that shortly I would become an officer via Officer Candidate School (OCS), and then later a major part of my Air Force career would be spent in flying KC-97 aerial tankers and supporting them as a staff officer in various functions.

At one time, with an inventory of 1,300 B-47’s and 1,200 KC-97’s, the Strategic Air Command (SAC) had B-47 wings virtually all over the United States. Each wing usually consisted of three B-47 squadrons and one KC-97 squadron. In 1957, both tankers and bombers began around-the-clock alert. Bombers usually “pulled” alert at home base, but SAC kept a number of B-47’s in the U. K., Spain and North Africa. Tankers also pulled some alert at home base, but since the B-47 was a relatively short-range aircraft, SAC positioned the KC-97’s a large part of the time on alert at northern operating bases (Ernest Harmon AFB, Newfoundland, Sondrestrom and Thule Air Bases in Greenland, Cold Lake, Frobisher, Churchill, Namao and Goose Bay in Canada; all were used as KC-97 “Task Force” Bases). It sure was “fun” to answer a practice alert klaxon at these northern KC-97 bases, climb into a frigid-cold airplane, start the engines and do everything possible to get

(Continued on page 9)



WELCOME BACK TO LINCOLN IN MAY 2012

Reunion Dates: May 1st thru May 5th

Okay fellows, following some serious negotiating, the contract has been signed with the Downtown Holiday Inn. I am sure most of you understand each state and city has different regulations regarding bringing in liquor and food, but again with some “smooth talking,” the situation changed slightly. The best hotel rate(s) are with the Downtown Holiday Inn. Included in the room rate of \$105 will be a free full breakfast and free parking for those staying in the hotel. Complimentary shuttle is available from the Lincoln Airport. There is transportation available from the Omaha (Eppley) Airport, but there is a fee; if this is the case, let Bill know, and he might be able to arrange a pickup for you.

The planned reunion in Lincoln will mark 47 years since the closing of the base. Therefore, I am appealing to “Everyone” to make a strong effort to attend. None of us is getting any younger as well as having health issues, so let us plan to make this Reunion one to remember!

With a great “crew” assisting me, I have no doubts we can make this Reunion a success. Tony Minnick is my right hand man and I have George Nigh, Wally Whitehurst, Gene Lee, Mike Barron, Sedge Hill and Jim Sine and their wives providing input. My wife, Jean, is my “secretary” since I hate to type, but I dictate what I want said.

Plans are to involve the “NE Dinner Group” in various capacities.

I am going to challenge each of you to make contact with former 307th BW and KC-97 members in your state, encouraging them to make plans to attend. Several at the Dayton Reunion promised to do just that and I know those of us in Nebraska plan to make contact with area 307th BW Association members.

FYI: All attendees to the reunion, whether they stay at the hotel or not, will need to pay the registration fee. Prices for the bus trips, dinner, and registration fee will not be set until closer to the next-to-final newsletter, prior to the reunion. Those who have attended previous reunions know the registration fee covers expenses that are required in putting on such an event. I do promise, to keep the

registration fee as minimal as possible. To help us do sound planning for the reunion, it is very important for you to complete and send the survey on page 11 of this newsletter.

Those of you who have not been to Lincoln for some time will be “shocked” by the growth and expansion of the city.

A Contract has been finalized with Kincade Buses. Each bus will seat 54 passengers, and has cushioned seats, air conditioning/heat, and a bathroom. From your Chairman, a challenge is extended to every enlisted person who receives the 307th Newsletter, to make every effort to attend the 2012 Reunion. All who possibly can are encouraged, to make plans for Lincoln. Who knows, this could be the last “hoorah”, but no one wants that to happen. You will not be able to make hotel reservations until the end of May 2011.

Remember, those of you residing in Lincoln are required to plan everything around the University of Nebraska’s Football Team, Women’s Volleyball, Baseball Games and other athletic events. Go Cornhuskers! (ha....)

**SO, MARK YOUR CALENDAR
FOR MAY 2012 FOR LINCOLN AS
THE PLACE TO BE**

**BILLY WILLIAMS, 2012
CHAIRMAN**

Treasurer's Report			
307th Bomb Wing B-47/KC-97 Association			
Ending Balance from last report July 15, 2010:			\$5,786.57
	<u>Expenses</u>	<u>Deposits</u>	
General Fund Balance			\$5,786.57
Expenses:			
Postal	444.30		
Printing	607.59		
Admin/Equip/Supplies	227.58		
Reunion Books	1075.47		
Website	42.75		
	2397.69		-2397.69
			3388.88
Income:			
Donations	665.00		
Dayton Reunion	6749.96		
Interest on account	13.76		
	7428.72		+7428.72
Ending Balance February 15, 2011			10817.60
Tony Minnick, Treasurer			

(KC-97 Continued from page 7)

the oil temperature and cylinder-head temperatures up, and taxi down the runway on simulated Emergency War Order (EWO) takeoff. This all had to be accomplished in 15 minutes or less, 24 hours a day, 366 days a year. During the cold winters, the crew chiefs and maintenance technicians kept some heat on the engines by installing a big red "sock" around each engine nacelle, with a gasoline-powered heater providing warm air to the engine through a large, flexible tube. Of course, almost constant monitoring was required concerning this hazardous heating system, a heating system that was absolutely necessary to get the engines started quickly for the EWO mission.

Thankfully, we never had to make an EWO launch. If we had, many of our tanker crews would have had to bail out over the endless nothingness of northern Canada, because many of the B-47 receivers needed all the fuel they could get. All the receiver had to do to get max fuel from the tanker was to say, "I have to go." With that statement, the tanker was obligated to off-load all the fuel he had except just enough to clear the refueling track and then bail out. Quite a few of us carried extra survival items in our flight-suit pockets while on alert, such as fish hooks, lines, sinkers, fire-starting items, etc. This was especially common during SAC's 100% generation during the Cuban fracas, a time of extreme tension.

A KC-97 crewmember's life in those days (1954-1966) was spent in practice missions, accomplishing ground training and pulling alert. We spent a great deal of our time on temporary duty (TDY) at our northern alert bases, where we'd pull alert for 7 days at a time. SAC didn't want its B-47's stopping anywhere for refueling as they flew to and from Europe and North Africa for their forward alert. KC-97's were always stationed TDY in the Azores Islands, their mission to bounce up and refuel the B-47's as they passed by. In many ways, that was good duty for tanker crews, because a lot of the refueling missions were flown in the early morning – so you'd get up really early, do your refueling sortie and be

through before 9 AM. Then you'd "lay around the pool" at the officer's club, your workday finished. These refueling sorties from Lajes Field in the Azores had high risk, however, because we flew all of them at 175,000 lbs "stub weight," about 10 tons more weight than Boeing designed the airplane to carry. Most of the airplanes weighed 90-93,000 lbs "dry," so you were really a "flying gas tank." If you lost an engine on takeoff, there was approximately a minute and a half where you were probably not going to "make it." The KC-97G had underwing tanks which could be jettisoned in such an emergency, but the earlier models had no drop-tanks, and the only "salvation" you had was in lowering the boom and pumping gas off the airplane as rapidly as you could, saying a prayer all the while.

Refueling altitudes for the KC-97 were usually 12,000--14,000 feet when the tanker was heavy, 12,000--18,000 feet when somewhat lighter. The B-47 flew at 30,000--40,000 feet, so he had to descend some 20-30,000 feet, slow down to just above stall speed, unload his fuel, then climb back up to complete his mission. As you can see, a lot of fuel was used up in just obtaining his air refueling from the KC-97. But there was no alternative until the KC-135 jet tanker arrived later; it flew at the same altitudes and airspeeds that the bombers (B-47, B-52, B-58) used, so their mission was a lot easier on both the bomber and the tanker crews.

I navigated KC-97's around the skies of the Northern Hemisphere for some 7-8 years and some 2,000 hours until SAC replaced them with KC-135's, then for the rest of my 27-year Air Force career, I flew KC-135's. I had the pleasure of flying the last C-97 in the Air Force inventory, however, at Goose Bay, Labrador. We used the airplane, a converted KC-97, as a "base support" aircraft. As Goose Bay itself was winding down as an active Air Force installation, we delivered the C-97 to the "boneyard" at Davis-Monthan AFB, AZ. We figured it'd be chopped up and melted down – but NO! When we taxied up at D.M., there were some senior Israeli AF Officers waiting. They bounded up the forward stairs

with their USAF escorts and asked two questions: "Do you have a complete set of maintenance and operations tech orders on board?" And, "Do you have two sextants aboard?" We answered in the affirmative, and they signed for the airplane, to fly it back East to Israel! One of their USAF Escort Officers said that ours was a "low time" C-97, and that Israel was very interested in obtaining it. Sometimes, I wonder if it is still flying over there somewhere, in the Mid-East.

Air refueling is a primary consideration and an absolute requirement for the success of any Air Force mission nowadays. And without it, during those early terse days of conflict during the Cold War, I dare say that there would have been a much-higher probability that the USSR might have made a too-aggressive mistake. I like to think that the Boeing KC-97 kept the Cold War cold!

About Flying

From Bill Novetzke

1. As an aviator in flight you can do anything you want...As long as it's right.... And we'll let you know if it's right after you get down.
2. You can't fly forever without getting killed.
3. As a pilot only two bad things can happen to you and one of them is: a. One day you will walk out to the aircraft knowing that it is your last flight in an airplane. b. One day you will walk out to the airplane not knowing that it is your last flight in an airplane.
4. Any flight over water in a single engine airplane will absolutely guarantee abnormal engine noises and vibrations.
5. There are Rules and there are Laws. The rules are made by men who think that they know better how to fly your airplane than you. The Laws (of Physics) were made by the Great One. You can, and sometimes should, suspend the Rules but you can never suspend the Laws.

(Continued on page 10)

A Tribute to Larry

By Don Campbell

The 307th lost **Larry French** on 1 March 2006. Who was Larry French? Larry was "a very special 307th ARS member", a friend to all, a great family man, a loyal buddy, and a sports nut.

I first met Larry at Lincoln AFB in 1959. I had recently graduated in Flying Class 60-B. I wanted fighters, but SAC took our class, and I got KC-97's (ugh!). Larry and I became instant friends, involved in golf, basketball, handball, racquet ball, ping pong, bridge, TDYs, etc. We were both co-pilots for a while. Larry had a couple of years on me and he became an A/C on the 97. I was his co-pilot for a couple of years and he split the "stick time" with me, 50-50. The years went by quickly and we got other assignments. Because of the war in SEA, I finally got a fighter assignment and was flying F-100s out of Bien Hoa VN. One day in 1969 I picked up some battle damage on a mission, and diverted to Phan Rang AB, about 100 miles from Bien Hoa. I had to leave my Hun there and get back to Bien Hoa. I checked with Base Ops, and there was a Caribou leaving right away. I jumped on board and found my old buddy Larry in the left seat. We chatted up old times on the trip and I complained about his "very slow airplane" (we also had a big head wind). We approached Bien Hoa and near the end of the runway at about 2,500 feet, I'm thinking "no way can we land." Larry pulls off the power, dumps the gear and flaps, and points the nose straight down (I'm terrorized), and then he greases in a landing, turns around and says, "Can you do that in your hot jet?"

Since 1979, the 307th ARS has had 15 reunions and Larry and his wife Barb attended them all until 2006. At a 1981 307th reunion in Colorado Springs, after many stories and drinks, Larry and I decided to play tennis at 2am. But the hotel would not turn on the court lights. I called back a little later and told the night manager that Major General French would like to play tennis. They turned on the lights and we played a few sets.

I miss him, the 307th ARS misses him. The squadron is full of great people, but all would agree that Larry was "a very special 307th member."

From **Don Campbell**, 173 Bicentennial Dr, Jefferson City TN 37760. Noticed in the last newsletter a note from "**Smoky**" **Beucus** on the lack of ARS articles, so thought I would send this along - - My wife and I make all the ARS reunions and will make a BW one soon.....The Best, **Don Campbell**

(About Flying Continued from page 9)

6. More about Rules a. The rules are a good place to hide if you don't have a better idea and the talent to execute it. b. If you deviate from a rule, it must be a flawless performance. (e.g., if you fly under a bridge, don't hit the bridge.)

7. The pilot is the highest form of life on earth. (Some may dispute this).

8. The ideal pilot is the perfect blend of discipline and aggressiveness.

9. About check rides

a. The only real objective of a check ride is to complete it and get the bastard out of your airplane.
b. It has never occurred to any flight examiner that the examinee couldn't care less what the examiner's opinion of his flying ability really is.

10. The medical profession is the natural enemy of the aviation profession.

11. The job of the chief pilot is to worry incessantly that his career depends solely on the abilities of his aviators to fly their airplanes without mishap and that their only minuscule contribution to the effort is to bet their lives on it.

12. Ever notice that the only experts who decree that the age of the pilot is over are people who have never flown anything? Also, in spite of the intensity of their feelings that the pilot's day is over I know of no such expert who has volunteered to be a passenger in a non-piloted aircraft.

The Obenauf Story

April 29, 1958 sticks in the mind of all B-47 crew members and others associated with the B-47 at that time. On that date, a young B-47 copilot at Dyess AFB, 1st Lt James Obenauf did the impossible. In an aircraft that had experienced an explosive fire, and which had been abandoned by the aircraft commander and navigator, flying from the back seat, without a canopy he brought the aircraft to a safe landing to save the life of the instructor navigator who was unable to bail out. For several days the story was carried by all the news media and numerous magazine articles were written about the event. Within a year or two it was the subject of a TV docudrama by one of the major programs of the time, perhaps Playhouse 90. What follows below is the account as it appeared in the newspaper. The B-47 Stratojet Association website at www.B47.com has additional accounts and photos, including an account from SAC's Combat Crew Magazine.

Dyess B-47 Lands Despite Explosion

2 Men Jump; No One Hurt

By WARREN BURKETT

Tuesday Morning, April 29, 1958

Reporter-News Staff Writer

All four crew members of a Dyess AFB B-47 are safe after a midair explosion over the Panhandle.

Two men parachuted into the Panhandle area about 10:30 PM Monday night. They were Maj. James M Graves, Aircraft Commander, and First Lt. John P. Cobb, Navigator.

Bringing the plane into Dyess in spite of the explosion damage were First Lt. James M Obenauf, Pilot, and Major Joseph B. Maxwell, Instructor-Navigator. Lt Obenauf drew praise from Col. Louis A. Rochaz III, for the landing of the plane with canopy and navigator's hatch gone. Similar praise was given by Col. Anthony J. Perna,

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341st Wing Commander, and other officers of the wing. The plane belonged to the 10th Bomb Squadron.

Lt. Obenauf and Maj. Maxwell landed the plane at Dyess about 12:15 AM. The two parachutists, Maj. Graves and Lt Cobb, landed safely on the ground and were being returned to Abilene by the Highway Patrol, base officials said.

The conditions of Lt. Obenauf and Maj. Maxwell were described as good about 1:30 AM Tuesday morning by Col. Frank V. Sturdivant, 819th Air Division Commander. The men, though injured, were taken from the plane to the hospital by ambulance and were put under sedation.

Base officials said they would continue investigation of the cause of the accident Tuesday before giving out any details on the cause.

Pilot's 'Impossible' Feat Saves Major in B47 Nightmare

By WARREN BURKETT

Wednesday, April 30, 1958

Reporter-News Staff Writer

A 24 year old pilot at Dyess AFB Tuesday was credited with doing the impossible and saving the life of a flying companion high over West Texas Monday night.

He is James E Obenauf of the 341st Bomb Wing's 10th Bomb Squadron. Lt. Obenauf, from Grayslake Ill., lives at 126 Nebraska Rd. With Lt. Obenauf in the Dyess AFB hospital is Major James B. Maxwell, 32 of 1140 Matador St., a Navigator Instructor whom Lt. Obenauf brought back alive by flying a burned and crippled B-47 Stratojet Bomber single handedly. Lt. Obenauf made a landing previously considered impossible by the Strategic Air Command.

It Happened this way: Monday, about 8 PM the B-47 took off from Amarillo AFB on a routine training mission to Denver, Colo. Said Col Anthony J. Perna, Wing Commander. At 10:45 PM over the Panhandle towns of Dalhart

and Stratford, near the northern border, the Aircraft Commander received a warning of a fire and explosion in the plane.

Bailout! Maj. James M Graves, whose crew was in the SAC Bombing competition last fall, ordered a bailout after sending the pilot's "Mayday" distress call on his radio. In the nose of the plane was the Navigator Lt John P. Cobb, 25 of 105 Maine Rd. Abilene, and Elko, Nev. Beside Lt. Cobb was Maj. Maxwell. Lt. Obenauf occupied the rear seat, behind Maj. Graves, of the Pilot's cockpit.

Lt Cobb was blasted through the navigator's hatch by a powder charge rigged to his seat. The two pilots began their ejection procedure, Col. Perna said, by blowing off the canopy to the cockpit. Then the powder charge to the pilots seats refused to work. Maj. Graves, the forward man, moved through the crawlway to the navigator's compartment and dropped through the escape hatch. Maj. Graves and Lt. Cobb parachuted bruised but un hurt

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Interest Survey for the 307th BW Reunion in Lincoln, May 2012

Please fill this out, clip it, and mail to **Billy Williams at 5546 Enterprise Drive, Lincoln, NE 68521**. Phone 402-438-6061. Or, email to bwilliams17@neb.rr.com.

- Do you plan to attend the 2012 reunion? Yes _____ No _____
- Do you plan to stay at the hotel? Yes _____ No _____
- How many nights are you likely to stay at the hotel (1 to 5)? _____
- Do you need local campground info? Yes _____ No _____
- Will you drive or fly? Drive _____ Fly _____

Which excursions would interest you? Please circle your interest, yes or no.

- Short trip to the Lincoln Veterans Memorial Gardens (location of the 307th Bench dedicated in 2000). Yes No
- Special tour of the Nebraska Athletic Facilities (not many tours are given). Yes No
- Bus trip to the Strategic Aerospace Museum. Yes No
- Day trip to Horseshoe Casino, meal and "free money" from the Casino. Yes No
- Free day to visit "ole" friends in the area. Lots of free time for the Ladies to do some shopping, visit the International Quilt Museum, or other interests. Yes No
- Would you be interested in dedicating a Bench at the Strategic Aerospace Museum, subject to Museum approval? Yes No

Your Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____ Email _____

(Continued from page 11)

near Dalhart and spent the night there. However 30,000 feet up in the air a new drama formed.

Unconscious. Lt. Obenauf prepared to follow Maj. Graves out of the bottom escape hatch Col Perna said, but found that Maj. Maxwell had not escaped. Instead, the blast of incoming wind apparently had thrown Maj. Maxwell against the rear of the cabin. His helmet was gone and he was unconscious from lack of oxygen. The three by four foot hatch was too small for the men to go through together, and Col Perna said it would have been almost impossible for Obenauf to have opened Maxwell's parachute. Instead he elected to try another almost impossible feat

Lt. Obenauf climbed back into the his rear pilots seat and elected to fly the plane down at 450 miles per hour, in below freezing temperatures with an open cockpit. Dyess officials said Lt. Obenauf radioed Civil Aeronautics Administrations towers, nearby air-bases and another B-47 crew in the area These put him back on course, and Lt. Obenauf elected to try to return to

Dyess AFB where he was familiar with the runway.

Anxious Scene Col. Perna said the Sweetwater Air Defense Command radar station kept Lt. Obenauf on course through their radar screen until he was in touch with the Dyess AFB control tower. Assisting was Webb AFB's radar also.

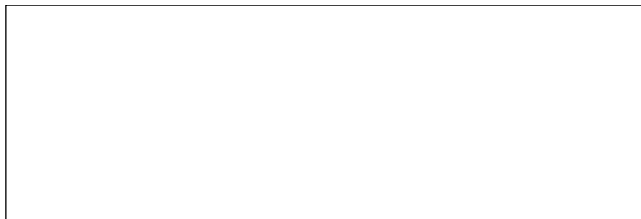
Maj. Doyle Reynolds, in charge of wing training, talked Lt. Obenauf down while another plane circled the area to aid if needed. In the control tower a tense group of officers including the top commanders of the base worked to figure out landing data needed by Lt. Obenauf, who was still sitting on the live powder charge of the ejection seat.

Base officials called the landing perfect. It had been considered impossible to do from an open cockpit because a bulkhead in front of the pilot makes it impossible to see forward unless the pilot leaned out to the side where wind and sand would blind him. Col. Perna said it was hard enough to land a plane from the rear cockpit under normal conditions.

Both Obenauf and Maxwell are hospitalized for treatment of shock, frostbite and wind burned eyes. Their condition is reported good, and Lt. Col. Lawrence Sutherland, hospital commander, said they would be released in a couple days. Lt. Cobb and Maj. Graves were on their way back from Dalhart late Tuesday.

Eye Patched. That wind just blew his eyelids right back, said a hospital official as Lt. Obenauf lay tiredly in the darkened hospital room. A patch covered his right eye.

The wives of the two men were nearby. "We are so lucky," said Mrs. Obenauf, mother of a son, David, 10 months. Agreed was Mrs. Maxwell, mother of Gary, 8, John, 7, Tim, 5, Joe, 2 and a baby 10 months. Maj. Maxwell said "if he hadn't let down when he did from 32,000 ft. to 15,000 I wouldn't have been alive but a few minutes." Damage was confined to the exploded right out-board jet engine and parts of the plane that caught fire. The whole episode lasted about an hour and a half, from 10:45 PM Monday until the landing at 12:15 AM Tuesday.



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